

**Strategic Opportunities Report
For the
City of Wichita
Prepared by
The Public Strategies Group, Inc.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Wichita has set its sights on transforming itself into a high performing, customer-driven, entrepreneurial government that produces great results for its citizens. It intends to become a model of world-class governance – where citizens are getting the best possible value for their dollars and the City has the public’s confidence and trust. The City starts this process with a number of strong attributes. It is a clean and safe city, with short commutes, a diverse and growing population, and a strong, committed City workforce that delivers sound basic services.

Wichita also faces some challenges. Over the past 20 years, the community has seen the loss of manufacturing jobs, locally owned major corporations have been sold to out of state or foreign entities, the workforce is older, income growth has lagged behind its peers, neighborhoods and parks have aged, and the education system is not meeting the community’s needs. Financial constraints are looming causing residents to question what value they are receiving from their tax dollars.

In 2004, Visioneering Wichita was launched to address many of these challenges. This community-wide initiative set a vision for Wichita to be a leading community for economic development, education, quality of life, and accountable government. It enlisted “Vision Partners” from across the community, including City government, to effectuate this new vision. It calls for Wichita City government to be “a national model for effective, efficient, inclusive, accountable government...representative of the community’s needs and desires.”

The City of Wichita has asked the Public Strategies Group (PSG) to be its “transformation partner” in becoming a high performing City government that:

- Is focused on delivering a clear set of results for their customers, the citizens of Wichita;
- Understands what results matter most to them;
- Makes performance matter;
- Moves decision-making down and out to the front-line, closest to their customers; and
- Fosters an environment of excellence, inclusiveness, accountability, learning and innovation.

In this report, we set forth our findings based on an assessment of City government operations that consisted of extensive interviews, focus groups and documentation review. Based on those findings, we identify those strategic opportunities that we believe will give Wichita the highest leverage in becoming a high performing City government. City leadership will be meeting on November 9-10, 2005 to discuss the findings and recommendations contained in this report and to map out a “Transformation Blueprint” and action plan that will guide the City’s transformation over the next few years.

Our key findings are as follows:

1. Visioneering Wichita set an important direction for the community; City government now needs to articulate a clear and cohesive set of results that it aims to accomplish for the citizens of Wichita.
2. The City Council’s role of setting policy (or “steering”), and the City Staff’s role of managing operations (or “rowing”) is not clearly delineated.
3. The City has been doing a good job “living within its means,” but it faces financial challenges that need to be addressed strategically.
4. A City-wide performance management framework is emerging, but there is not a cohesive system for ensuring accountability for results.
5. While the City seems attuned to the needs of its residents, is making good improvements in customer service and is perceived as providing quality city services, there is ongoing pressure on the City to do more with less.
6. City employees are generally viewed as competent and capable, but bureaucratic red tape and a history of micromanagement are barriers to a more empowering culture.

Wichita has a sound foundation upon which to address the challenges identified in the findings. The following are a summary of the strategic opportunities that are recommended for the City to achieve its vision of a high performing organization and assist in achieving the broader vision for the Wichita community to be a first choice Midwestern city.

1. Establish the Priority Results of City Government
2. Clarify the Council’s Policy Setting Role From the Staff’s Operational Role.
3. Use Budgeting for Outcomes to Ensure Citizens Are Getting the Best Possible Value for Their Tax Dollars and Address Financial Challenges Facing the City
4. Formalize the City’s Emerging Performance Management System
5. Create a City-wide Culture of Accountability for Results By Making Performance Matter.
6. Put the City’s Customers More Solidly in the Driver’s Seat
7. Shift Control to Achieve Priority Results At the Front Lines

BACKGROUND

As the City of Wichita's "transformation partner," PSG's first order of business was to gain a thorough understanding of the City's current conditions, including what it has been doing well and where its priority areas of improvement might be. To this end, PSG reviewed documents and conducted interviews with numerous internal and external stakeholders during August and September of 2005. During this process, the City's Project Team provided invaluable assistance with research and scheduling. External stakeholders included neighborhood leaders, business and economic development leaders, and school and county officials. Internal stakeholders included the Mayor, each of the 6 other City Council members, the City Manager, City department heads, union representatives, and other supervisory and non-supervisory employees. In total, about 80 individuals were interviewed (see list attached). Documents that were reviewed included the Visioneering Wichita Plan, the City's Draft Strategic Agenda, the City's 2006-2007 Proposed Budget, submissions about customer service and business process improvements undertaken in the various Departments, and additional information available from the City's website.

Through a synthesis of this data, PSG identified Wichita's areas of strength and areas for improvement. From these strengths and improvement areas, the report identifies strategic opportunity areas that will move the City to become a "first choice" city. The strategic opportunities derive from the five levers of change that PSG research and experience with public organizations tells us are key to public sector transformation. We refer to these levers of change as "the five C's" because they relate to how the organization addresses: Core purpose, Customer, Consequences, Control, and Culture.

This report will serve as the basis for a two-day planning session with City elected officials and City staff on November 9-10, 2005. The purpose of the session will be to clarify the priorities of Wichita City government, to reach agreement on change strategies, and develop a "Transformation Blueprint" and Action Plan for implementing those strategies.

The Transformation Blueprint and Action Plan will serve as a roadmap for the City to follow as it seeks to transform itself to a high performing organization over the next two to five years.

KEY FINDINGS

Finding 1: Visioneering Wichita set an important direction for the community; City government now needs to articulate a clear and cohesive set of results that it aims to accomplish for the citizens of Wichita.

The community has stepped forward, with the City's assistance, and created "Visioneering Wichita" as a framework for positioning Wichita as a national leader in economic development, education, quality of life, and accountable government. Its long-

term vision is based on creating the public and private sector leadership to achieve a vibrant future for the Wichita community at large. Its objectives appear to have strong support and visibility among community leaders, City Council members and City staff.

“[VW is] very impressive. It is forcing city government and the community to focus on what needs to be done.”

- Wichita Department Director

There are certain critical aspects of Visioneering Wichita. . . . The City needs to take a perspective of working together with the community [to get those aspects done].”

- Business leader

The vision for City government and the results the City hopes to achieve are less clear. City staff does not have a clear sense of what the City Council as a whole wants to achieve and what its priorities are. The lack of a cohesive vision and direction from the City Council results in an unintended consequence: the perception from both internal and external stakeholders that the City has become more political and parochial in its decision-making. The perception that it has become more political is likely a reaction to the organization having insufficient clarity of purpose. Without clarity of purpose, day-to-day decisions are not guided by long-term results, so those decisions, each one made more on the basis of the specific outcome, will tend to produce less consistent and less predictable results as a whole. This was reinforced by other comments in the interviews.

“No one has gone to the Council and asked them – the next three years – what do you want to work on – what do you want staff, resources or the CIP to focus on.”

- Wichita Department Director

“The City went from a business-driven organization to a politically-driven organization.”

- Direct quote from internal stakeholder

(but several external stakeholders made comments of a similar nature)

“The City of Wichita is very reactionary and not proactive.”

- External Stakeholder

City Staff have completed a Draft Strategic Agenda that is intended to align the City’s goals and measures for progress with Visioneering Wichita. It is a positive first step. However, the Agenda sets forth 34 general goals, which limits its use as a priority-setting document for budgetary or management decision-making. In addition, progress is largely measured by completion of activities, rather than by achievement of outcomes. Once the Council has clarified their key goals and objectives for the City, the Strategic Agenda document should be tailored to clearly communicate to the public and the internal staff the priority results that the City expects to deliver.

The Agenda should also establish outcome-based targets for the prioritized results, with the strategies and activities sorted to align with the results. In this way, the City will have something concrete upon which to focus, make decisions, and measure success. There

must also be alignment between the Strategic Agenda's goals and strategies and in the individual City departments' goals, objectives and performance measures as outlined in the Executive Budget. The priorities must be owned by the Council, along with staff.

Finding 2: The City Council's role of setting policy (or "steering") and the City Staff's role of managing operations (or "rowing") is not clearly delineated.

There is a blurring of the lines between the Mayor and Council's responsibility to set policy and "steer" City government versus the Staff's role of operations and carrying out the policy, or the "rowing" function of the organization. In part, this is another unintended consequence of a lack of unified clarity of purpose. It manifests itself with Council members second-guessing Staff decisions and being perceived as micro-managing, and Staff members being more reactive than proactive in addressing Council member concerns.

"There is Council misunderstanding of their authority and role."

- Council member

There is also a perception on the part of Staff and among external stakeholders in the community that there is distrust between the Mayor and Council, on the one hand, and Staff, on the other hand. In contrast, most Council members gave City Staff high marks. While some Council members noted some mistrust, the Council, in general, believed that improved communications and information flow would work to elevate their confidence in City Staff.

"The impression is that City staff are at odds with the Council."

- External stakeholder

"Information is not being withheld. It's just that the pieces are not being put together."

- Council member

Another situation that fosters the Council members' involvement in the "rowing" is when they receive a call from their constituent. This tends to cause the Council member to believe that City services are not sufficiently addressing their customer's needs. Whereas in the past, a Council person would direct the complaint to City Staff to address, it is more likely now that the Council person will get directly involved in resolving the problem.

"I often wonder if elected officials understand their role and trust the staff to get the job done."

- City staff member

"Nothing gets done in the inner city parks unless someone is hollering."

- Resident

Finding 3: The City has been doing a good job "living within its means," but it faces financial challenges that need to be addressed strategically.

The City operates from a solid financial base. Its current cash/fund balance is projected to remain above 10% of general fund expenditures for the current and next two fiscal years. While our review of financial matters was a high level cursory review, the financial practices appear to be sound, avoiding uses of gimmicks, such as the use of one-time dollars for ongoing expenditures. In addition, the “price of government” for the City appears to be very competitive with comparable communities.

However, projected revenue is not keeping pace with projected expenditures. The cash/fund balance for the general fund is projected to decline, and small changes in the projected revenue or projected expenditures could quickly exacerbate the problem. Projected expenditures will need to be curtailed if the cash/fund balance is to not only remain above 10% of expenditures, but grow to a targeted 15% of revenue. At the same time, demands will increase for resources to assist in achieving Visioneering Wichita objectives as well as other identified improvements, such as code enforcement or infrastructure improvements. The current budget process makes it very difficult for the Council to guide improvements in city services during austere budget times.

Finding 4: A City-wide performance management framework is emerging, but there is not a cohesive system for ensuring accountability for results.

A framework for a City-wide performance management system is emerging. The City has performance measurements in certain areas, largely as a result of training delivered last fall to 300 City managers. Additional training, a City-wide “balanced scorecard” and a “State of the City” report are under development. The City uses the data provided by the International City/County Managers’ Association (ICMA) Center and research on best practices in other cities for benchmarking its performance. The annual Proposed Budget documents reflect the performance measures being used by the various Departments and how their performance compares to other comparable cities.

At this time, the tracking and reporting of performance is not consistent among all of the departments. The Water & Sewer and Information Technology Departments are recognized as being in the forefront of having their operations being effectively driven by measurable results. The *2006-2007 Proposed Budget* is the best resource for City performance data. Making the data more visible to the public through the City website would further enhance public awareness around what results are being accomplished with their tax dollars.

Customer-oriented measures are not systematically in place across the organization. The performance measures that are reported are, in most instances, output measures, and not result measures. Output measures reflect the level of effort – but they do not reflect the effectiveness of the effort.

Without a consistent system for measuring and reporting performance, the City has not been able to make performance matter as effectively as it could. The City could create consequences for performance by more systematically reporting results to its customers,

both internally and externally. Other means for building consequences for performance into the way City government operates would be to initiate pay for performance, performance-based recognition and reward programs and performance-based contracting. The City would be better able to celebrate its successes if it better tracked and reported its performance.

“Measures are looking better than last year, after people have taken the class.”

- City staff member

The City Manager has a reputation for performance accountability. He meets regularly with his Department directors to provide direction and guidance. Some directors submit their goals and strategies as part of their year-end reports, using a variety of different formats and supplying mostly output information. The budget process is also used to collect departmental goals, strategies and plans. However, there is no ongoing, regular process for performance accountability being practiced. There is not a consistent, disciplined process for setting priorities and ensuring accountability for achieving those prioritized results.

The current process has resulted in some departments being clear on expectations, while others are not. Even in departments where the expectations are clear, there is still doubt because of the lack of clear, consistent direction from the Council on many of the issues. The comments below symbolize the inconsistency.

“Departments have a clear expectation from George.”

- City staff member

“How clear are expectations – in some areas they are pretty clear. In other areas – there needs to be some improvement.”

- City staff member

“Not very clear.”

- City staff member

Finding 5: While the City seems attuned to the needs of its residents, is making good improvements in customer service and is perceived as providing quality city services, there is ongoing pressure on the City to do more with less.

The City is generally viewed as a well-run organization and a place that delivers basic services well. Benchmarking performance data from the International City/County Managers’ Association (ICMA) Center for Performance Measurement further substantiates that Wichita is able to deliver good services efficiently. (see 2006-2007 Proposed Budget)

“The City is clean, civil, and relatively well-run.”

- External Stakeholder

“The perception is that the basic services are good – police, fire, streets.”

- External Stakeholder

“City employees are providing friendly customer service. Taxpayers are getting their monies’ worth.”

- External Stakeholder

The City has been successful in expanding community outreach efforts and the community policing initiative is viewed as quite successful. The City has done a good job creating forums for resident input and should continue to build on those efforts. Residents noted the Neighborhood City Halls and District Advisory Boards as examples of the increased, positive communication with the public.

“Citizens can be heard in a more informal manner and warmer environment than attending City Council meetings at City Hall.”

- External Stakeholder

“The Neighborhood City Halls are much busier than people realize.”

- External Stakeholder

“(The City is) a great place to live; residents really care about the City.”

- External Stakeholder

“Community policing and sense of well-being is higher than it has been in the past.”

- External Stakeholder

“(The City) is safe.”

- External Stakeholder

When the Departments were asked to submit a summary of the customer service and business process improvements that had been made or were underway, numerous examples surfaced. It appears that learning gained by employees during previous training initiatives around business process and customer service improvement has continued to be put into practice. The magnitude of improvement-oriented activity across the various Departments was even a bit of a surprise to City leadership once it was all compiled.

There is too little recognition within the organization for the success that is occurring. In addition, the impact of the improvements, especially in terms of the benefits accruing to customers, is not always well quantified. Greater visibility of these performance improvement successes and their results could incent additional improvement activity to occur.

While the reputation of City services in general is positive, there is definite demand coming from constituents for greater ease in doing business with the City and better services. Although there is a customer call center that operates 24/7 and an Express Office at the downtown City Hall for payments, access to certain City services is not

viewed as customer- friendly. Residents cited several examples, from the challenge of knowing who to call for code enforcement to getting responses on Park maintenance.

“It would be helpful to have streamlined access to the city.”

- External Stakeholder

“The City should not wait to fix infrastructure problems until the problem necessitates something being done.”

- External Stakeholder

“Code violators are a big problem . . . They need better enforcement.”

- External Stakeholder

“It seems to be a power struggle and you need to know someone to get something done.”

- External Stakeholder

As the City is being asked to do more with constrained resources, customer feedback data would help the City set priorities where it was most important to its residents. A few departments solicit customer feedback for their specific services. However, this is not a universal practice across all departments and the questions tend to be limited to the quality of the customer’s experience during a particular transaction. More importantly, there is no City-wide, ongoing customer survey process that collects data on what Wichita residents value, expect and experience with their City services. There is also no regular analysis of complaint data to identify and proactively address emerging problem issues.

Another strategy for leveraging limited City resources would be for the City to partner with key community stakeholders. However, on that score, the City receives mixed reviews on its eagerness to partner and cooperative attitude. Accomplishing the Visioning Wichita objectives is an ideal opportunity for City government to collaborate with key community stakeholders around a common agenda for success. Some external stakeholders view the City as a willing partner, with positive changes occurring over the past year. The current economic development efforts are viewed as a positive development, for example. Other local political, education and business leaders question the City’s willingness to collaborate.

“There is an attitude of arrogance.”

- External Stakeholder

“Some departments are very good to work with.”

- External Stakeholder

“Success of relationships has been driven by department heads.”

- External Stakeholder

“We get more accessibility and responses (today).”

- External Stakeholder (government representative)

“Economic Development collaboration is working well.”

- External Stakeholder

Finding 6: City employees are generally viewed as competent and capable, but bureaucratic red tape and a history of micromanagement are barriers to a more empowering culture.

Beyond subject area expertise and experience, having managers and staff with the skills to make decisions, innovate, and get the job done for their customers is critical to a high performance workplace. Furthermore, managers must know how to successfully empower and engage the employees around high performance. During the interviews, there were many who cited a generally competent, dedicated and experienced workforce as one of the City’s greatest strengths. There is great potential for creating the type of work environment in Wichita where City employees are encouraged and empowered to seek out creative solutions to address customer needs and are focused on achieving the City’s priority results.

“I thought the city was well organized and I was impressed with the commitment of lower and upper management.”

- Department Director

“The work ethic was a higher caliber than I had experienced.”

- Department Director

“I knew (the City) had good staff and good technical skills.”

- Department Director

The City government organization has been historically characterized by highly centralized, top down decision-making. The new City Manager has brought a management style that is much more centered on delegating greater amounts of decision-making to front line employees. While the City Manager envisions a more empowered organization, the City lacks the necessary structures to ensure accountability for results without the top down, hierarchal and bureaucratic controls that are in place today. Managing and leading for performance accountability also requires City managers to practice different skills which they may not have had the opportunity to learn.

“This organization (the city) was a hub and spoke organization. It was high performance as long as it was lead by the city manager.”

- City staff person

“While the message is getting across – it needs to be more clearly articulated. What has not been clear is that people should take initiative on their own.”

- City staff person

“Department managers are not used to a free reign so they may not know what to do.”
- City staff person

“Department managers need training to micromanage less. They need training to handle change.”
- City staff person

“Employees have been neglected for too long. We have cut training and travel in half.”
- City staff person

Bureaucratic red tape in the form of internal controls slows responsiveness to citizens and stifles employee creativity. While employees and the agencies see a new approach from the City Manager, they have not experienced the same new approach from the controlling internal service agencies. The employees are not convinced the controlling agencies and individuals in charge of those agencies have changed their approach.

“We still have the red tape in the internal support departments because the same people are still running the show.”
- City staff person

“The cultural change has not filtered down.”
- City staff person

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR WICHITA TRANSFORMATION

Based on the above findings, we believe the following potential strategies, which we call Strategic Opportunities, offer the City of Wichita the greatest leverage for transforming its organization to one that is more high performing, accountable, and innovative. At its November meeting, the City leadership will have the opportunity to explore these Strategic Opportunities in more detail and decide which ones to incorporate into its Transformation Blueprint.

1. Establish the Priority Results of Wichita City Government.

The Council need to reach agreement on what are those results that the citizens of Wichita most want its City government to deliver. This would be a significant step toward clarifying what the City government will hold itself accountable for accomplishing and enabling the City to align the staff, resources and activities to accomplish them.

These results can and should align with those items of Visioneering Wichita that the City government can most directly impact and they should be reflected in the City’s Strategic Agenda. The Visioneering Wichita framework around the six “foundation” areas of economic development, education, quality of life, government, infrastructure, and leadership are a good place to start.

This will be a first step toward clarifying direction, changing perceptions about political or parochial decision-making, and enabling the Council and staff to more visibly work together on initiatives important to the City.

The priorities may be in broad areas, such as Safe Neighborhoods; however, to make progress clear, one to three indicators of success will need to be identified and targets will need to be set for those indicators. For example, an indicator for Safe Neighborhoods might be, “percentage of neighborhoods with no outstanding Code enforcement complaints.” There will be important items that the City still needs to perform that may not fit into the top priorities. However, the objective is to focus on the most important – to set priorities. Such prioritization will guide the Council in future policy decisions. By establishing the results that matter, the long-term, important issues will impact how time and resources are prioritized, rather than just the short-term and urgent issues.

2. Clarify the Council’s policy-setting role from the Staff’s operational role.

The City Council’s role is to “steer” City government, that is, to set the priorities and targets for the results to be accomplished and to set the broad strategic parameters for accomplishing those results. The Council is also responsible for holding the Staff accountable for achieving those priorities and tracking the City’s progress. The Staff’s role is to “row,” that is, to devise and take the necessary actions to implement strategies that will accomplish the targeted results.

By clarifying these roles, the Council will have less need to involve themselves in the “day-to-day operational decisions” and to question whether Staff are trying to move their own agenda. Staff, on their part, will have greater flexibility to devise creative ways to accomplish the results.

The key to successfully separating the Council’s steering function from the Staff’s rowing function is to be clear about strategic priorities and to be able to have the means to hold staff accountable for results, which will be discussed below.

3. Use Budgeting for Outcomes to ensure citizens are getting the best possible value for their tax dollars and strategically address the financial challenges facing the City.

Budgeting for Outcomes enables the outcomes that the Council intends to achieve to drive the budgeting process, versus the traditional process where the operations of the government traditionally drive the budgeting process.

The process starts with a determination of the available revenue and then asks the question – how best do we spend this set amount of money to obtain the outcomes that we desire.

Budgeting for Outcomes enables policy makers to get a grip on the financial condition of their city. It pays for outcomes – instead of budgeting based on line items; the budgeting process requires agencies to commit to certain results for a given budget, highlighting and rewarding agencies that provide more results for the dollar.

It is a tool that allows the Council to look at the broad strategic issues that the budget impacts, to cast aside “the way we always have done it,” and take a fresh, strategic look at how to have the biggest impact with limited financial resources.

The process counteracts the status quo inertia created by the traditional budget process by employing the following process:

- Step 1: Determine the priorities of government
- Step 2: Decide the price for each priority.
- Step 3: Decide how best to deliver each outcome at the set price.

Budgeting for Outcomes can be a powerful transformational tool for Wichita by focusing on outcomes and placing financial resources in those areas that will maximize those outcomes.

4. Formalize the emerging performance management system.

The Department of Finance has already begun to construct a performance management framework for City government. Departments have received training on the framework and how to develop meaningful performance measures which are reflected in the City’s *2006-2007 Proposed Budget* document. Additional training is planned. These developments are a solid foundation upon which to build a performance management system that enables everyone in City government to maintain a clear and consistent focus on achieving results. That system must first clearly define performance based on an agreed upon set of results, it then must have a meaningful set of performance measures for each result, and finally, it must incorporate a means for regularly measuring and reporting the extent to which progress is being made toward achieving the results.

A system of results starts at the City-wide level and then reaches across the organization to all Departments and down within each Department to the level of the front line team. Results and performance measures for City government that currently exist either in the 2006-2007 Proposed Budget, Visioneering Wichita, the City’s Draft Strategic Agenda, or within individual Departments need to be brought into alignment with any new ones that are developed.

5. Create a City-wide culture of accountability for results by making performance matter.

For any system of performance management to be transforming, City leadership will need to use it effectively, to hold oneself and others accountable for achieving the results that matter. Performance accountability requires managers to set clear expectations, provide developmental feedback and make performance matter. These

are behaviors that managers can learn through training and practice, supported by individual and group coaching. Training and performance support can also assist front line teams in learning how to hold themselves accountable for performance.

Flexible Performance Agreements can be used by the City Manager and his Department Directors to set forth the expectations and results that the Director will be held accountable for achieving, in exchange for flexibilities and support that the Director may need to best accomplish the desired results.

Making performance matter is one of the hallmarks of a high performing organization, and it is one of the most difficult things to accomplish. Traditional bureaucracies tend to recognize and reward tenure, consistency and activity completion. High performing organizations recognize and reward achievement of results that matter to the organization's customers. Incentive structures that are designed to support bureaucratic ideals need to be redesigned to enable competition, promote risk-taking and support innovation. Pay for performance initiatives need to replace automatic pay increases based on seniority. Consequential rewards and penalties can be intangible as well as tangible in nature.

Performance-based contracting can also be used to create competition among providers and holding providers accountable for performance in a meaningful way. Making external providers and at times, internal providers, compete for their business can be a powerful lever in transforming organizations.

6. Put the City's Customers More Solidly in the Driver's Seat.

Accountability to the customer is a powerful lever to transform the culture of a public organization. For there to be greater accountability to customers within Wichita City government, the voice of the customer must be heard more loudly within the organization. Feedback must be solicited and customer satisfaction measured through regular surveys. Complaint data should be analyzed to discern emerging problems.

The City could further put customers in the driver's seat, by going beyond making service improvements in response to the feedback, and developing customer service standards, and using "guarantees" or "redress" to create consequences for performance. Empowering front line teams to take action in the best interests of the customer further reinforces the importance of being attuned to customer needs.

7. Shift Control to Achieve Priority Results at the Front Lines

When we discuss shifting control strategies, there are several levels of empowering the organization to achieve results. We are suggesting a three-prong strategy of empowering employees, empowering the organization, and empowering the community. Successfully achieving the empowerment in these areas will significantly alter the culture of the organization – which is vital for the long-term success of the city in becoming a high performance organization.

Empower the employees

Few changes will shift the culture of the organization more than to successfully empower individuals. To do so, we recommend establishing processes to:

- ❑ Review hierarchical management controls within departments
- ❑ Push authority down to frontline employees
- ❑ Provide coaching and targeted training opportunities for managers to learn how to help foster and lead an empowered and accountable organization.

Empower the organization

Organizational empowerment requires elimination of many of the rules and controls that administrative agencies, City Manager, or the Council imposes on them. Some of these controls may be acute controls – individual decisions on individual matters that require an agency to focus resources on a non-strategic issue, while preventing a focus of resources on long-term priorities identified by the Council. Other controls are continuous; controls on spending are a common one that is typical in Wichita government. Part of allowing elected officials to let go will be to successfully make the agencies accountable for results.

Empower the community through collaboration

Empowering the community is not often thought of as an empowerment strategy. The reality is that if the City can successfully collaborate, other entities or individuals in the community will become empowered to help the City accomplish its results.

The feedback from external stakeholders is that, while the City has made improvements, they do not view the City as an inviting partner. Focusing on improving habits, processes and policies that foster collaboration, the community can be empowered to help the City achieve its priority results.

NEXT STEPS

This Strategic Opportunities Report will form the basis for a two-day retreat on November 9-10 with the City Council and City staff. At this retreat, City leaders will decide which strategic opportunities they are committed to making happen. From there, a Transformation Blueprint, Action Plan and financing strategy will be devised to implement the priority strategies in Phase Two of the “Transforming Wichita” initiative.

Attachment – List of Interviewees

In preparing this Strategic Opportunities report, PSG interviewed the following individuals and groups. We want to acknowledge their cooperation and thank them for their insights.

Internal Stakeholders:

City Manager (1 person, individual interview)

Mayor and City Council members (7 people, individual interviews)

City Department heads (19 people, individual interviews)

Front line employees and Mid-level Managers from IT/IS, Water/Sewer, Fire, Environmental Services, OCI, Finance, Personnel, Public Works/Maintenance, Police (10 people, group interview)

Union leaders - FOP, Service Employees Intl Union (SEIU), Employee Counsel, Teamsters (4 people, group interview)

External Stakeholders:

Citizen Stakeholders - representatives of each District Advisory Board (6), Wichita Independent Neighborhoods and NE Millair Neighborhood Assn. (an active NA) (10 people, group interview)

Business Leaders - Downtown Rotary, builders/developers, all aircraft plants (Boeing, Raytheon, Cessna), president of Chamber Board, president of Greater Wichita Economic Development Coalition (7 people, group interview)

Development Stakeholders - local residential and commercial contractors, consulting engineers, architects, builders/developers (13 people, group interview)

Public Opinion Leaders - Wichita Public Schools board of education members and administration; Sedgwick County administration and County Commissioners (9 people, group interview)